



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 31, 2008

GOVERNOR SEEKS SUPPORT FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE
Feds asked to boost LIHEAP funding to help Arizonans pay utility bills

PHOENIX – To ensure families have adequate financial aid available to pay high utility bills, Governor Janet Napolitano is urging the Bush Administration to support the Warm in Winter, Cool in Summer Act (S. 3186). The Senate bill would provide an additional \$2.53 billion to the program that helps Americans cope with inflated energy costs like those facing Arizonans this summer.

"It just doesn't make sense not to provide all possible help when Arizonans face economic hardship, skyrocketing energy prices, and record temperatures," Governor Napolitano said. "This year more people are asking for help to pay their utility bills. We need to do everything we can to help."

The additional \$2.53 billion would supplement the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP assists low-income households in paying utility bills. Fifty-two Senators from both political parties sponsored the Warm in Winter, Cool in Summer Act to boost relief funds.

However, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a policy statement saying it recommends a Presidential veto for the bill because it is "largely a heating assistance program." In a letter to OMB Director Jim Nussle, Governor Napolitano emphasized the program's year-round focus, including the need for cooling assistance. She also noted that Arizona is regularly short-changed by this federal program.

"Extreme heat is as miserable and dangerous as extreme cold," the Governor wrote, citing 28 deaths in Arizona last year due to excessive natural heat. The Governor urged the OMB to change its recommendation and partner with Congress to help all Americans make it through this tough economic time safely.

A copy of the Governor's letter to Director Nussle is attached.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit www.azgovernor.gov.